

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims**

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1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a hollow rack shaft which is formed cylindrically by bending the opposite sides of a substantially rectangular plate so that the sides are joined and in a part of the surface of which a row of rack teeth along a direction of the axis is formed, wherein:

a complementary profile composed of the continuation of a convex portion and a concave portion is provided to said respective sides; and

the respective sides are joined owing to this profile when they are confronted so that they are not detached.

5. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a hollow rack shaft according to Claim 4, wherein:

further, said convex portion and/or said concave portion of said joined sides are/is caulked to deform the boundary.

6-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a hollow rack shaft provided a row of rack teeth along a direction of the axis in a part of the surface for forming a substantially rectangular plate cylindrically by bending it so that the parallel two sides are joined, wherein:

said plate is one plate acquired by welding a first plate for a rack teeth area for said row of rack teeth to be formed and a second plate for an area except it.

10. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a hollow rack shaft according to Claim 9, wherein:

said first plate is thicker than said second plate.

11. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a hollow rack shaft according to Claim 9, wherein:

said first plate is made of material more satisfactory in hardenability than that of said second plate.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A hollow rack shaft ~~according to Claim 12, which is~~ formed cylindrically by bending a plate so that two sides of the plate are joined, wherein in a part of a surface of the plate a row of rack teeth is formed along a direction of an axis of the plate, and wherein:

said rack shaft is provided with a first area and second areas on both sides of said first area;

wherein in said first area, the row of rack teeth and a semi-cylindrical part on a reverse side of the row of rack teeth are formed; and

in said second areas, a complete cylindrical part is formed and at least one of the second areas has a diameter different from a diameter of the semi-cylindrical part in said first area,

~~wherein:~~ wherein a diameter of at least one of said second areas is smaller than a diameter of said first area.

14. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a hollow rack shaft which is provided with a first area and a second area on both sides of it, in which in said first area, a row of rack teeth and a semi-cylindrical part on the reverse side are formed and in which in said two second areas, a complete cylindrical part is formed and at least one of the second areas has a diameter different from the diameter of the semi-cylindrical part in said

Application No.: 09/918,117  
Amendment Dated August 13, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of March 18, 2003

first area, wherein:

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*cont*  
a plate provided with a part with first width having width corresponding to the first area for said row of rack teeth to be formed *C* and a part with second width corresponding to said second area and having narrower width than said part with the first width is plastically deformed cylindrically.

15. (Cancelled)

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